



**National Forests in North
Carolina**
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News Release

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Bald Knob Fire in McDowell County Grows to 20 Acres Over Weekend

NEBO, N.C., July 20, 2015 – The Bald Knob Fire, burning on Forest Service land in McDowell County, grew to approximately 20 acres over the weekend. Predicted hot and dry weather will increase the potential for fire growth over the coming days.

Forest Service officials are managing the fire for multiple objectives including firefighter safety and ecological benefit. Due to the steep slopes, thick brush and downed timber where the fire is burning, firefighters are employing a confine and contain strategy, shoring up existing containment lines in the fire's potential path and scouting out new ones.

"The country it's burning in is pretty steep and littered with bug-killed timber, so we're keeping firefighters out of harm's way, monitoring the fire's progression and planning for contingencies should the hot and dry weather continue," said Greg Phillip, Fire Management Officer for the Grandfather Ranger District. "There hasn't been a wildfire in this particular area for some time, so this fire is doing just what it needs to do, eating up fuel on the forest floor, reducing future fire hazards while also making way for new growth."

No structures are at risk and firefighters are closely monitoring the fire. A temporary closure of a section of the Mountains to Sea Trail between the footbridge over the North Fork of the Catawba River and Dobson Knob Road (Forest Service Road 106) remains in place.

The Bald Knob Fire, which was reported on July 17th, is burning adjacent to

multiple prescribed burn areas that have recently been treated which will limit the fire's ability to spread rapidly. However, without significant rain, the fire could potentially burn for several days. Members of the public near the communities of Woodlawn, Sevier and those travelling along State Highway 221 can expect to see and smell smoke, with heaviest smoke likely to occur in the afternoons when temperatures are high and humidity low. The cause of the fire was likely lightening from recent strong thunder storms, though the ignition source remains under investigation. Five personnel are currently assigned to the fire. Cooperating agencies include the North Carolina Forest Service and the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission.

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